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merit the thanks of every one in the profession, and posterity, at least, would commend their endeavours.

The foregoing Essay on Amber was printed in the Philosophical Transactions, when curiosity was much excited upon the origin of this valuable production: besides the authorities quoted in this place, the reader may meet with many others in James' Medicinal Dictionary, under the word *Ambra*; Philosophical Transactions, No. 19, p. 349; No. 248, p. 5; No. 468, p. 322; Dictionnaire Raisonné Universel de Matière Médicale, tom. vii. p. 209, et suivant: Macquer Dictionnaire de Chimie, sous le mot *Succin*. Edit. 1778.

Though Amber was known to Antiquity, Frederic I. King of Prussia, was the first who rendered it an important commercial object. Amber is very common in this kingdom, and in some places lies almost on a level with the surface of the ground, so that the labourers collect considerable quantities of it in tilling the land. There are some parts of Prussia, where neither tree nor herb vegetates, where the ground is covered with a substance resembling the bark of a tree. Frederic caused this substance to be removed, under which was found a bed of black earth, and beneath this a bed of wood, in the veins of which, amber was discovered, greater in plenty in proportion to the quantity of this wood.

Some years ago, a considerable quantity of fine amber was found in Saxony, which has furnished four dissertations, printed in the collection of the Curiosities of Nature, an extract of which may be seen in the French edition of Hehkel's Pyrrhologia.

It is said that the king of Prussia has a burning mirror of amber, that is a foot broad, and free from blemish. There is, in the cabinet of the Duke of Florence, a fine column of amber, six feet high, and of the most perfect lustre. There are also vessels made of this substance with infinite labour. We are informed, that some years ago there was an artist in Prussia, called Samuel Soin, who had not only the art of clarifying amber, and render-

ing it transparent, but also of dying it of any colour, and even to soften it and inclose insects in it, to make a gain of selling it to persons curious in these rarities.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

AT the present period, when the attention of the inhabitants of Belfast has been turned to the state of the poor, and to providing employment for them, as the best means of affording them substantial relief, we are induced to give an account of the management of the poor at Hamburg, extracted from a publication on the subject by M. Voght, in 1796, and from the 23d report of the directors published in German, at Hamburg, in January 1798, with some observations by the Bishop of Durham, as published in the 2d vol. of the Reports of the Society for bettering the Condition, and increasing the Comforts of the Poor.

In the beginning of the year 1788, an institution was formed for the poor at Hamburg. Of 110,000 inhabitants in Hamburg there were above 7000 distressed persons in want of regular relief, besides an average of 2,500 in the hospitals. There were peculiar circumstances attending this great and commercial city, which contributed to increase the number of poor, requiring assistance;—severe winters, heavy taxes on the necessaries of life, fluctuation of trade, the attraction of the poor from neighbouring countries in expectation of employment; and a great number of female servants at very low wages, of whom many must necessarily remain unprovided for, when age or sickness should unfit them for active service.

As soon as the outline of the plan was agreed upon; an arrangement was formed, that such revenues as till then had been expended in alms by the several church-wardens, and those the administration whereof had been connected with the work-house, should be united under one administration with the monies to be collected from private benevolence. The most respectable inhabitants went round per-

sonally to collect subscriptions; and the town was divided into 60 districts, each being allotted to the care of three overseers; and the whole being under the direction of a board, or committee of 15 directors, elected from among the overseers.

The general object was to provide comfort and subsistence for the aged, and for those afflicted with incurable disease, or labouring under temporary sickness; to supply the means of occupation for those who could work; and, by giving education and employment to children, to afford the most beneficial relief to those burthened with large families.

For the reception of the aged, a public building, or asylum, was provided; but in cases where they had friends, who would receive them, they were allowed as much as their expense in the asylum would have amounted to. For the sick, and particularly for women at a period when they have the greatest need of charitable relief, medical assistance was provided. For the different districts in the town there were appointed five physicians, five surgeons, and five midwives, who, upon notice were to attend the lodging of the patient, if not capable of going abroad. Food and medicine were immediately supplied, with so much attention and economy, that in the course of the three first years, 12,969 poor persons had been attended in sickness, whose cure (including broth and an occasional supply of other food) had not cost more, upon an average, than 3s. 6d. each.

For a provision for the children of the poor, where, from the vice or the decease of a parent, no suitable home remained for the child, they boarded them in the houses of the better sort of poor. In other cases they allowed the mother* a weekly

sum for the younger children. They also prepared a warm room in every parish, and bread, milk, and potatoes in plenty; so that parents, who went out to work, might leave their young children there during the day, and thus prevent any obstacle to their own industry, or to that of their elder children. At the same time they came to a determination "that no family should be allowed any relief for any child above six years of age; but that such child, being sent to school* should receive not only payment for its work, but also an allowance in the compound ratio of attendance at school, good behaviour, and application to work." For the instruction of the children, three sorts of schools were opened:—the first for those who had no other employment; these were schools of occupation as well as instruction: the second, evening schools for the education of children who wrought with their parents during the day;—the third were Sunday schools, which continued alike open to all, as well to those who had gone into service in Hamburg, as to children on the school-list. The average number in these schools were 600; the expense of them about £700. a year.

The most difficult part of the undertaking still remained: that of pro-

poverty, where both parties become so necessary to each other; and where heroic exertions of parental and filial piety are not seldom become habitual. Would the humane and philosophical observer look through the rags of pale misery; calculate the sacrifices daily made there in many families, and amongst neighbours; and enjoy the rapture with which a mother embraces her son, whom she sees eagerly devour the *crumb of bread that she had refused to her own wants*—the annals of the poor might reconcile him to human nature, when disgusted with the list of crimes which blacken the page of history."

* Mr. Voght's observations on the removal of children from their parents are feeling and judicious.—"We were averse (says he) to place the children in a general hospital, and the poor mothers would have been still more so. May all the favourers of those houses, such as they are, seriously reflect, whether the advantages they offer, can compensate for the education of the heart, which nature yields in those bits of

* It should be observed that this was in a town, where children can attend school conveniently. In the country (I speak from observation) great prejudice, both to the health and to the morals of children, attends their being sent to and returning from a distant school, or manufactory, at early and late hours, and in all variety of weather and season.

curing regular and suitable employment for those who could work; and of ascertaining who were, and who were not able. A resolution was adopted, "not to permit any one to receive a shilling, which he would have been able to have earned for himself; and at the same time to reduce the support of those, who required relief, below the scale of what any industrious person, in such circumstances, could earn." Printed queries were sent to the poor, the answers to which were written on the blank column of the page, verified by the evidence of their neighbours, and by the personal attendance of the overseer, or (where the state of health was in question) of the physician. Many of the queries were calculated to ascertain the average earning of each member of the family: but in this respect the truth was, for some time, very difficult to be obtained; it being the interest of the party, to make his capacity for work appear less than it really was.

A manufactory for spinning flax existed at that time in Hamburg. The proprietor gave it up to the institution, together with the stock, the teachers, and the experience of several years. As the poor who wanted relief, were chiefly women and children, this was adopted as their general work. The clean flax was sold to the women at a certain and low price; and the yarn which they spun, purchased of them at £30 per cent. above the usual rate. To whatever fineness the yarn was spun, the whole profit was received by the poor. Every poor woman brought with her work a book, in which the pieces delivered in by her were noted; so that she thereby received a certificate of industry, and the institution had a regular account always before them of the employment of the poor. In the mean time, the men and larger boys (who were not the numerous or necessitous part of the poor) were employed in mending the roads, cleaning the streets, making rope yarn, and other labour, at a certain allowance per day.

After these general preparations were made, the committee conceived that they could now offer relief to

all sorts of poor; as they had the means of enforcing the only condition required, that of their contributing towards their own support, the degree of exertion which they were capable of. The overseers therefore went through the streets, and made inquiries if any inhabitants were in need of relief. Those who applied, if capable of work, were supplied with employment; if prevented by want of skill, they were admitted into a school opened for that purpose; and in the course of three months were taught to spin; being allowed for the first week a gratuity of two shillings, every week after two pence less; and, in the twelfth week, dismissed with the donation of a pound of flax, and a spinning wheel.

The quantity of work, which the disabled poor were capable of, was easily and accurately ascertained by a week's trial at the spinning school. The result was produced weekly before a sub-committee; and the sum that each poor person could earn, was entered in a book; from that time they were paid weekly what their earnings fell short of 1s. 6d. a week,* whenever it appeared by their book, that they had earned to the known extent of their abilities.

In the proportion of two shillings a week, an allowance was made for their lodging. But as this is paid every six months, and the pauper's allowance is weekly, it was thought proper (except in cases where the lodging was otherwise provided for) to retain four pence a week, for the purpose of paying the landlord's rent; thereby keeping the poor out of debt, and giving them a more comfortable habitation than what otherwise they could have expected.

Clothing and bedding were at first much wanted; but in order to prevent their being pawned or sold, it was thought proper to mark them as the property of the institution, which the pauper was to keep while he behaved well. The committee purchased the materials by wholesale, and employed some of the poor in

* It should be observed that the means of subsistence are much cheaper at Hamburg than in London.

making them up. They were delivered to the pauper on the recommendation of the overseer, countersigned by the director of the district; or to children, upon the recommendation of the sub-committee of the schools.

A complete list of the poor being at length obtained, public notice was given, in the month of October, 1788, that no deserving poor person could or would, in future, remain unnoticed. Instructions were very generally distributed among the poor, as to the mode of obtaining relief; and the public was intreated to inform the committee, if any pauper had not been duly attended to.—No such case has hitherto occurred.

It was established as a general rule, that three years' residence in Hamburgh should entitle the party to relief; allowance being also made for accidents, illness, or child-bed; which, in all cases, were held to be proper objects of charity. A place of reception was opened for foreign poor, where they were taken care of for three days, and then discharged with the means of subsistence home. At the same time, in order to prevent the further influx of other poor, it was prohibited to receive any stranger, without informing the magistrate or overseer, under pain of bearing all the expense of supporting such stranger if he should become an object of charity within three years.

These general regulations have been strictly adhered to for ten years, except in the cases of poor persons being ill, when they have sick tickets given them, which exempt them from the general rules; and during the most severe winter weeks, when a regular increase of allowance is ordered by the committee. But no inequality of distribution is ever admitted, whatever may have been the prior situation of the party. Those who had formerly been in a more respectable situation, continued to be the proper objects of private benevolence, of which no public institution ought to supersede the exertions.

The conduct of the institution is in the general committee, consisting of fifteen directors. They appoint four sub-committees from among them-

selves; one for manufactures, another for the schools, a third for cloathing, and a fourth for the police of the poor. The sub-committees have each their separate officers, and keep distinct accounts, which are given in every month to the treasurer and the board.

Ten of the directors are selected, each one of them superintending six of the sixty districts, to receive from the overseers accounts of what is wanted in the respective districts for fixed support, for occasional relief, for accidents, and for discretionary assistance; which, when certified by the director of the district, is sent for payment to the treasurer, whose accounts are laid every month before the committee, and checked by the director's certificate. These ten directors may be considered as "the advocates for the institution," to prevent, in their several districts, excess of expense.

From the inquiries made at the commencement of the institution, it appeared that there were more than 4000 women, 2000 children, and 1000 men, then in Hamburgh in the utmost want* of immediate relief. The whole number consisted of 7391 individuals, and composed 3903 families. The first cloathing of so great a number of destitute persons, would have exceeded the powers of the institution, but for the quantity of

* The poor at Hamburgh had been habituated to live almost entirely on a miserable beverage, which was called *coffee*, and sold in messes, with about half a pound of indifferent bread. This wretched substitute for food they took twice a day. About two years ago the directors introduced the use of Count Rumford's soups, with great benefit to the poor at Hamburgh. It has been a saving of 9 parts in 16, or rather more than half the former expense of their food. Children, in particular, have derived great advantage in health and strength from the use of these soups. The saving to the institution in respect of fuel, by the introduction of Count Rumford's boilers, is stated in the Report (which contains a great deal of minute and curious detail in respect to fuel as well as food) to have been rather more than 61 parts in 66; the cost of their fuel, which is very scarce at Hamburgh, being at present not a tenth of what it was.

Hamburgh Report, Jan. 1798.

ready-made shirts and other apparel, which the ladies supplied with a liberal hand. Cloathing and schools for instruction are now wanted only for the children.

The purchase of spinning wheels, and of other instruments of employment, and the support of schools where 500 grown persons were at the same time instructed in spinning, added to the allowance made to the poor for the loss of time while they were learning to spin, occasioned a very enormous expense at the commencement of the institution. But this was not of long continuance. The schools for teaching spinning to grown persons soon became unnecessary; 3354 spinning wheels had been given to those who had proved themselves able to spin. These were employed in spinning, when more lucrative employment was not to be found. 2000 poor, who at the time they entered the school could do nothing at all, have since earned from eight pence to twenty-pence a week, at times, and during hours, which were formerly entirely lost to them. The average of all expenses attending the employment of the poor during three years, up to December, 1796, including the loss upon the sale of manufactured goods, has been only £611. per annum; and, in the worst cases that have occurred, the expense of enabling a pauper to earn five guineas a year, has not been more than half a guinea.

It will not be a small recommendation to many persons, that since the year 1788, scarce a beggar has been seen at Hamburg. But there is another much more important circumstance, the decrease of sickness and misery among the poor. The average mortality of the medical institution at Hamburg, before 1788, had been above 1 in 10. In the year 1789 it was greatly reduced, and has since by a gradual progress diminished to less than 1 in 20. This and the extension of the schools, and of the benefit of the medical institution to persons *not actually entitled to relief* has greatly diminished, and must still have a much greater effect, in diminishing the list of distressed poor, and in increasing the number of in-

dustrious and thriving citizens at Hamburg.

OBSERVATIONS.

The division of *labour* has not produced more extraordinary effects in a well conducted manufactory, than the division of *attention* in a well arranged institution. The giving to every acting member his peculiar and appropriate duty, not interfered in by any other person, as has been done with great effect at Hamburg, is of the utmost importance in every establishment. Those who have attended much to the conduct of charities, must have had frequent occasion to regret, that, even among the best intentioned men, more time, and more power, is often wasted in the counteraction and controversion of petty and trivial measures, than in the furtherance of the real objects of the institution. This is the *friction*—the impediment of action—the obstruction to progress—which it is most essential to prevent; and it is in this respect, that the benevolent and enlightened founders of the institution at Hamburg, have been peculiarly judicious and successful.

The maxims adopted at Hamburg in the execution of their plan, are very deserving of attention:—"That every allowance, which supersedes the necessity of working, becomes a premium to idleness:—that labour, not alms should be offered to all, who have any ability to work, however small that ability may be:—that one shilling, which the poor man earns, does him more real service than two which are given him:—that, if the manner in which relief is given is not a spur to industry, it becomes in effect a premium to sloth and profligacy:—and that, if the mere support of a pauper is above what any industrious person in the same circumstances could earn, idleness will become more profitable than industry, and *beggary* a better trade than the *workshop*." In proportion as the conductors of the institution at Hamburg have rigidly adhered to these maxims, they have found the benefit extended and increased; whenever they have relaxed, the *thermometer of industry* has been lower, and less work has been done.

One great cause of the success of the institution at Hamburg has been the *publicity* and *regularity* of the accounts. Without this all charities become jobs, the directors grow indifferent to public approbation or censure, and the administration falls into the hands of under officers, who soon learn so to entangle the business, that no subsequent director is ever able to unravel the clue.

That which has been done in Hamburg, by the co-operation of its best and wisest citizens, has been effected at Munich by the abilities and perseverance of one individual.* The

* Count Rumford has had the satisfaction of being very useful to the institution at Hamburg. The following extract is translated from the Hamburg Report, of January 1798.—“The military workhouse in Munich had the good fortune to remain several years under the immediate direction of its founder, *Count Rumford*; better known to philosophers under his former name, Sir Benjamin Thompson. He had found means to derive the most important advantages from the long known, and long neglected fact (of which, however, every baker avails himself) that meal exposed with water a certain time, in a certain degree of heat, attaches to itself a certain quantity of the water, so firmly that the water appears to be changed from a fluid to a solid state; and will actually support the heat of red hot iron without being separated from the meal: he united this fact with the new chemical discoveries, respecting the component parts of water; and applied the whole to a composition of cheap food, of which barley is the basis; which mixed with pease, potatoes and some other ingredients, and boiled very slowly, and for a long time, with a certain proportion of water, and then properly seasoned, and mixed with cut bread, to which may be occasionally added, a small quantity of various cheap articles, which give it a variety of rich and agreeable tastes, wholesome and savoury food may be prepared at a very moderate expense. The deputation made several experiments in preparing this kind of food, which all succeeded; but they still found a want of Count Rumford's boilers, in which the heat is so completely confined, that a very small quantity of fuel is found to be sufficient for cooking a very large quantity of food. The Count, to whom application was made on this occasion, very politely sent the deputation a complete model of an oblong boiler, on his best

particulars of that establishment are so well and so generally known, that it is unnecessary for me to enter into the detail of them. The institution has, in both instances, been wisely adapted to the circumstances and condition of the respective places; at Munich with additional power, from the establishment being blended with the government of the state, and producing an influence on the country, of which that city is the capital; and from its being connected with a variety of useful and extraordinary inventions and improvements, which Count Rumford has made, and *is now making*, for the benefit of mankind.

October 29, 1798.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE
ESTABLISHMENT AT HAMBURG, IN
1799.

The following paper is extracted from a late publication at Hamburg. It is submitted to consideration, how far the detail of Hamburg in 1789, is descriptive of the present situation of London; and whether it might not be desirable, that the Hamburg account of 1799, should be applicable to an improved state of our own metropolis.

State of Hamburg in the year 1789.

1. The streets crowded with beggars, many of them strangers; all in great distress; the modest and deserving perishing unheard and unknown, for want of a share in that relief, which the street-beggar anticipated by fraud and importunity. 446 persons in the house of correction, besides prisoners.

2. It appeared upon inquiry, that, besides street beggars, there were many poor persons without bedding or clothes, perishing wretchedly and unknown; objects who were ashamed to make their appearance in the day time, on account of the want of decent apparel.

3. There were not less than 600

principles, with its fire place, dampers, &c. which being executed of the proper size, has been found to answer all that could be expected from it.” No less than sixteen copies of this model have already been made, and sent from Hamburg to different great towns and cities in Germany, Denmark, and Sweden.